

to be led by Mueller; why Attorney General Jeff Sessions was involved in the firing of Comey; and why Sessions is helping select the new director, according to multiple people." <http://wapo.st/2qDtSFs>

UH OH ... -- "F.B.I. Once Warned G.O.P. Congressman That Russian Spies Were Recruiting Him," by NYT's Matt Apuzzo, Adam Goldman and Mark Mazzetti: "The congressman, Dana Rohrabacher of California, has been known for years as one of Moscow's biggest defenders in Washington and as a vocal opponent of American economic sanctions against Russia. He claims to have lost a drunken arm-wrestling match with the current Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, in the 1990s. He is one of President Trump's staunchest allies on Capitol Hill. ...

"In a secure room at the Capitol, an F.B.I. agent told Mr. Rohrabacher in 2012 that Russian spies were trying to recruit him as an 'agent of influence' -- someone the Russian government might be able to use to steer Washington policy-making, former officials said." <http://nyti.ms/2q2WrKy>

NEW POLITICO/MORNING CONSULT POLL -- "Poll: Majority disapprove of Trump sharing intel with Russians," by Cristiano Lima: "A majority of voters say it was 'inappropriate' for President Donald Trump to share highly classified information with Russian officials, according to a new poll released Friday. And a plurality of voters 41 percent - say Trump's disclosure means they are 'not confident at all' in the president's ability to handle highly classified material.

"Fifty-eight percent of those surveyed in a new Morning Consult/POLITICO poll disapproved of the president's decision to divulge sensitive materials to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Russian Ambassador to the U.S. Sergey Kislyak during an Oval Office meeting last week. Only 22 percent of those polled deemed Trump's actions 'appropriate,' while 20 percent remained undecided."

<http://politi.co/2pRHHmF>

ISAAC DOVERE on "Trump's divisive unity plea": "President Donald Trump loves division, except when he's the one under attack. Then he goes all kumba-do-what-I-say. 'I hate to see anything that divides,' said the man who ran one of the most divisive campaigns in one of the most divisive elections in history, when he was asked about his view on the appointment of a special counsel to investigate whether his own aides were involved in Russian efforts to swing the 2016 election.

"Thursday, under the most intense fire of his fire-filled presidency, Trump tried a

defense of saying he had nothing to do with the offense, and that it's all a ruse by a small number of entrenched politicians who were trying to shake him from his great goal of bringing the country together-'whether it's Russia or anybody else, my total priority, believe me, is the United States of America,' he said. It also gave him cover to sneak in a few more punches along the way. Standing in the East Room of the White House at a press conference with the Colombian president, Trump went on to bash Obamacare and anyone who doesn't believe in his border wall. He also took time to point out the differences between Hillary Clinton's campaign and the 'much more successful Trump campaign.'" <http://politi.co/2q2ZaDA>

FIRST PERSON - BENJAMIN WITTES on Lawfareblog.com, "What James Comey Told Me About Donald Trump": "Comey understood Trump's people as having neither knowledge of nor respect for the independence of the law enforcement function. And he saw it as an ongoing task on his part to protect the rest of the Bureau from improper contacts and interferences from a group of people he did not regard as honorable. ... The first incident he told me about was the infamous 'hug' from Trump after the inauguration: The hug took place at a White House meeting to which Trump had invited law enforcement leadership to thank them for their role in the inauguration.

"Comey described really not wanting to go to that meeting, for the same reason he later did not want to go to the private dinner with Trump: the FBI director should be always at arm's length from the President, in his view. ... [A]s he told me the story, he tried hard to blend into the background and avoid any one-on-one interaction. He was wearing a blue blazer and noticed that the drapes were blue. So he stood in the back, right in front of the drapes, hoping Trump wouldn't notice him camouflaged against the wall. ... Comey was disgusted. He regarded the episode as a physical attempt to show closeness and warmth in a fashion calculated to compromise him before Democrats who already mistrusted him." <http://bit.ly/2q344A0>

CALLING IN THE LAWYERS -- "Trump meets with lawyers at the White House," by Alex Isenstadt and Josh Dawsey: "President Donald Trump convened his legal team on Thursday to discuss the escalating investigation into whether his campaign colluded with Russia during the 2016 election. The huddle, according to four people briefed, took place the day after it was announced that former FBI Director Robert Mueller would serve as the investigation's special counsel. One White House official said the discussion, which came the day before Trump leaves for his first trip abroad since taking office, centered around the nuts and bolts of how the investigation would work -